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STATE TAKES FIRST STEPS TO IMPLEMENT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

BOISE – Today, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna praised the Idaho Legislature for taking the first, bold steps in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force for Improving Education, of which he was a member.

At the beginning of the legislative session, Superintendent Luna proposed a fiscal year 2015 budget aligned with the implementation of the first year of the Task Force recommendations. His budget proposal included funding for leadership awards, discretionary funding, advanced opportunities and classroom technology. The majority of his budget proposal was adopted this year.

“For the upcoming school year, the Legislature has not only increased overall funding for Idaho’s public schools to the highest levels since 2008, but the state also has provided critical investments to begin implementing the Task Force recommendations – reform efforts many of us have been talking about in education for years to make sure every student graduates from high school prepared for college or the workforce,” Superintendent Luna said.

He continued, “Through this budget and complementary pieces of legislation, we will improve the way we compensate Idaho’s teachers, provide more advanced opportunities for high school students, begin to restore discretionary funding to local school districts, strongly emphasize classroom technology, and continue to invest in professional development for Idaho’s teachers. Because of these steps, we will make sure every student graduates from high school prepared for college or the workforce.”

The FY2015 budget is \$1.374 billion in general funds for Idaho public schools in fiscal year 2015, a 5.1 percent or \$66.2 million increase over fiscal year 2014.

Here are highlights of the FY2015 Public Schools Budget, and how it works to implement the Task Force recommendations:

- **Teacher Compensation:** The budget includes a 3.8 percent total increase in ongoing funding for teacher compensation, which includes \$15.8 million to fund the Leadership Awards portion of the Career Ladder Compensation Model for Idaho’s teachers developed by the Task Force, a 1 percent increase in the money that funds teacher salaries at the local level, and funds to increase minimum teacher salaries to \$31,750. Through the Leadership Awards, local school districts will have the ability to award teachers annual bonuses of between \$850 and \$5,700, in addition to their salaries.
 - *See Task Force Recommendation #12: Career ladder Compensation Model.*
- **Discretionary Funding:** The budget includes \$35 million to help restore discretionary funding for local school districts and public charter schools. Districts use this funding to pay for utilities, health care and other costs at the district level.
 - *See Task Force Recommendation #11: Restoration of Operational Funding.*
- **Professional Development:** The budget includes \$12.15 million for continued professional development for Idaho’s teachers. Of this funding, \$9.4 million will be distributed to local school districts to use for the implementation of Idaho Core Standards, gifted and talented, or counseling. The remaining \$2.7 million will be used at the state level to provide professional development to Idaho’s teachers through Idaho Core Coaches in each region.
 - *See Task Force Recommendations #2: Idaho Core Standards and #16: Ongoing Job-embedded Professional Learning.*



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- **Classroom Technology:** The budget includes \$13.4 million in continued funding for classroom technology. Of this funding, \$8 million will be distributed to local school districts to spend on integrating technology in the classroom, \$2.25 million will continue to be spent on wireless infrastructure for Idaho's high schools, \$3 million has been set aside for a second year of technology pilot projects in Idaho's public schools, and \$150,000 will be used for the online course portal.
 - *See Task Force Recommendation #9: High Speed Bandwidth and Wireless Infrastructure.*
- **Strategic Plans:** The budget includes \$326,000 to assist school districts and public charter schools in developing strategic plans. This legislation directs each school district and public charter school to develop a strategic plan that focuses on improving student performance.
 - *See Task Force Recommendation #7: Annual Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Continuous Focus on Improvement.*
- **School Safety and Security:** The budget includes \$2.2 million in funding to be distributed directly to local school districts to invest in Safe and Drug-Free School Programs at the local level.
- **Content and Curriculum:** The budget includes \$4 million in one-time money that will be distributed to local school districts that they can use to purchase instructional content and curriculum that are in hard copy or digital formats.
 - *See Task Force Recommendations #2: Idaho Core Standards and #16: Ongoing Job-embedded Professional Learning.*

The budget was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate. It now awaits the Governor's signature. When approved, it will go into effect July 1, 2014 for the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition to the budget, the Legislature also approved key pieces of legislation to advance the Task Force recommendations, including a bill to increase advanced opportunities for Idaho's high school students ([SB 1233](#)), the bill to create the Leadership Awards portion of the Career Ladder ([HB 504](#)), and the bill that directs local school districts to create strategic plans focused on student achievement ([HB 521](#)).

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